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Governor Evers Signs Bill Creating 12 New Circuit Court Judgeships

Madison, Wis. (March 5) – Gov. Tony Evers signed Assembly Bill 470 into law today at the District III Court of Appeals in Wausau. 2019 Wisconsin Act 184 creates 12 new circuit court branches in the state, four each in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Director of State Courts Judge Randy R. Koschnick was in attendance for the signing, as were Court of Appeals Deputy Chief Judge Lisa Stark; District Eight Chief Judge James Morrison, who serves as chair of the Committee of Chief Judges; District Ten Chief Judge Maureen Boyle; and many other circuit court and Court of Appeals judges.

“The governor’s signing of this important legislation today demonstrates cooperation between the branches of Wisconsin’s government,” Chief Justice Patience Drake Roggensack said. “I thank the governor for his approval of this important addition to our courts. I also am pleased with the work of the legislature that responded to the needs of the people for prompt resolution of court cases, which these new judgeships will facilitate.”

“Whether it is circuit courts working to provide public safety while protecting individual rights in criminal actions or circuit courts responding to the needs of families or resolving commercial controversies, we all benefit from a court system that has sufficient quality jurists to meet the needs of the people,” Roggensack continued. “The governor’s action today assists the courts in meeting its responsibilities in this regard. I look forward to welcoming new judges to the bench beginning in August of 2021.”

The Committee of Chief Judges worked closely with the Office of Court Operations to determine the need for additional judgeships based on judicial workload numbers. Judges around the state have reached out to their legislators and provided testimony regarding the challenges facing judges today in providing justice in an effective and efficient manner. Assembly Bill 470 passed the Assembly by a 94-1 vote in November 2019, and the Senate by a vote of 33-0 on February 19. The counties to receive new branches will be determined by the Director of State Courts.

“Our justice system has been doing more with less for far too long, and today we are taking another step in ensuring that our justice system is operating efficiently and best serving our communities,” Evers said in a press release. “It took a strong bipartisan effort to get Assembly Bill 470 to my desk and I want to thank the folks who pushed to get this done to keep our justice system just and our communities safe.”

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